DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 524 CG 010 559

AUTHOR Washington, Craig S.
TITLE All-Freshman Residence Halls: Do They Make a Difference?
PUB DATE [69]
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Freshmen; *Dormitories; Environmental Influences; *Females; Field Studies; Higher Education; Research Projects; *Social Attitudes; Students; *Student Welfare

ABSTRACT

Student dissatisfaction in residence hall living has prompted university officials to seek variations in residence hall design and staff. The purpose of this study was to investigate the utility of one of these variations--the all-freshman women's residence hall. Freshman women in two types of residence halls (all freshman women, and a mixed classes residence hall) were compared on the basis of academic achievement, and attitudes about the campus environment. Results indicated that on those factors, no support can be offered in favor of an all-freshman women's hall. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED123524

ALL-FRESHMAN RESIDENCE HALLS: DO THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Craig S. Washington

Indiana State University

Student dissatisfaction in residence hall living arrangements has prompted university officials to seek a wide variety of alternatives for improving and enriching residence hall life (Riker, 1966, Petrello, 1969; Crew and Giblette, 1965; Davison, 1965; Elton and Bates, 1966).

Special attention has been given to the grouping of students according to class or academic year of study. Schoemer and McConnell (1970) found that there was little evidence to support housing freshman women in an all freshman women's hall on the basis of academic achievement, attitudes concerning the campus climate, and conduct. Herbert (1966) found that whether or not 1,783 freshman women in four residence halls were separated from students of other classes in the hall had no effect on grades. Riker (1965) however, describes the apparent success which Stephens College has had in providing separate residence halls for

---

"Now at the University of Massachusetts."

"Department of Education."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

beginning women students. Shaffer and Ferber (1965) also discussed Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, which has provided residence halls for freshman women since 1929 and apparently with a great deal of success.

The varying findings of these articles provide little firm guidance as to the wisdom of separating freshman from upper-class students. The present investigation was directed toward providing additional data through the study of the attitudes and achievement of freshman women at Indiana State University.

Sample. Random samples of 101 women in an all-freshman women's hall and a 101 freshman women form a residence hall housing both freshman and upper-class women were used in this study.

Instrumentation. Academic achievement was evaluated on the basis of grade point average comparisons between the two groups.

Perceptions of the environment were evaluated by the use of the Inventory of College Activities (Astin, 1968). This instrument was developed as an objective means of describing and measuring some of the environments of undergraduate institutions. The instrument yields scores on the peer environment, the administrative environment and the physical environment.

The College and University Scales (1966) was also used to evaluate the students' perceptions. This instrument consists of

160 statements about University life and is used to define the intellectual-social-cultural climate as students perceive it. Both criteria were used as a one-time measurement of freshman perceptions.

Procedure. The Inventory of College Activities was given out by Resident Assistants on each residence hall floor, on the first Wednesday in December, just prior to the end of the semester. The College and University Environment Scales was given out by the Resident Assistant on each residence hall floor, on the first Tuesday in February just after the start of the second semester.

The freshman women students signed a release form giving their permission for the writer to secure the students grade point averages for the first semester.

The T-Test statistic was used to evaluate the differences in grade point averages. The Chi-Square statistic was used to evaluate the differences in perceptions between the two criteria.

Results and Discussion. When the two groups were compared on the basis of academic achievement it was found that the women in the all-freshman hall did no better academically than those freshman women in mixed class residence halls.

Likewise, students' perceptions of their intellectual-social-cultural climate as evaluated by the College and University

Scales also showed no significant differences between the two groups. The Inventory of College Activities, however, did indicate one significant difference at the .01 level. Women in the all-freshman women's residence hall scored higher than women in the mixed classes residence hall on the dimension of leisure time. This high score indicates that women housed in the all-freshman women's hall spent a larger percent of their time going to movies, dating, playing cards, etc. The high score seems to indicate that they tended to place a high value on having a good time and getting along with people. On all other factors, the results showed no differential effects on the students perception of the college environment.

Limitations. Limitations in the data should, however, be considered. Instruments used in this study may not tap all relevant dimensions. Further, this study examines only two dormitories on one campus and generalization to other settings should be made with caution. However, students were placed randomly into different resident halls thus strengthening the findings. Also, upon observation, the women housed in the all-freshman hall were more active and won more university events, thus adding support to the high score received on the dimension of leisure time.

Conclusion. The establishment of freshman residence halls has been strongly advocated in recent years not only to add to the variety in living arrangements, but also to provide an easy transition from the high school environment to the college environment. Administrators had hoped that the homogeneous living arrangement would allow an opportunity to provide a more satisfactory atmosphere for academic achievement as well as positive social interaction. The results of the study, however, produced little significant data to suggest the establishing of freshman residence halls on these bases.

References

Astin, A. W. The college environment [Washington], American Council on Education, 1968.

Crew, J. L., & Giblette, J. F. Academic performance of freshman males as a function of residence hall housing. Journal of College Student Personnel, March, 1965, 167-170.

Davison, M. B. Educational outcomes and implications of academically or vocationally focused small groups of undergraduate students in a women's residence hall. Paper read at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention, Minnespolis, April 1965.

Elton, C. F., & Bate, W. S. The effect of housing policy on grade point average. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1966, 7, 73-77.

Herbert, D. J. The relationship between the percentage of freshmen on a residence hall corridor and the grade point averages of the occupants. College and University, 1966, 71, 348-352.

Petrello, G. J. Residence hall as learning center. Improving College and University Teaching, Summer, 1969, 17, 166-168.

Riker, H. C. College housing as learning centers. American Personnel and Guidance Association, 1965, No. 3. (Monograph)

Schoemer, J. W., & McConnell, W. A. Is there a case for the freshman women's residence hall. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1970, 49, 35-40.

Shaffer, R. H., & Ferber, D. A. Residential college concept: Campus organizational patterns for quality with quantity. Indiana University School Education Bulletin, 1965, 41, 1-34.